

VLR- 11/18/80 NRHP- 9/2/82

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Calvert Mill; Washington Mill (preferred)

and/or common The Old Mill

**2. Location**

street & number Route 683 \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Washington  vicinity of Seventh  
congressional district (J. Kenneth Robinson)

state Virginia code 51 county Rappahannock code 157

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. Peter Kramer

street & number

city, town Washington \_\_\_ vicinity of state Virginia 22747

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rappahannock County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Washington state Virginia

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible?  y  e  s  no

date 1979 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Washington Mill is a frame, five-level structure with a gambrel roof. The building has a vertical division in the first three floors into two structural sections, which perhaps were built separately for separate functions. Whether each was built at the same time or at different times has not been determined. The smaller section has some nails older than any found in the larger section. Some suggestions in the stone foundation and the slight differences in framing in the two sections (one approximately 35' x 30', the other 20' x 30') indicate that they were built at different times. It is possible that the grinding wheel activity in the larger section necessitated a section with a separate framing system but one that was built simultaneously with the other section. On the first-floor level is a stone chimney into which are tied large support beams for each section. These beams, almost plates, are side-by-side and are inserted into the southeast end of the chimney.

The basement level and part of the first story are built of rubble stone. In the basement are several 5'-6' stone grinding wheels. There seems to be a working space on this level as well, accessible only from the east sides as the building is banked into the hill. The stone buttress was probably added ca. 1950 when other minor details were changed for a concert by the Virginia Symphony.

On both the first and second floors, the larger section has massive timbers, mortised-tenoned-and-pegged together, sometimes with four pegs in one joint. The joists rest in small cuts on top of the central beam. There are diagonal braces and studs. The smaller section also has massive timbers, also hand-hewn, but with more refinements: chamfering and lamb's-tongue details on posts and beams. There are smaller diagonal braces to the ceiling plate and the joists rest in slots cut into the central beam. In the southwest corner of the second floor is a section of horizontal paneling secured with handmade nails. Saw marks are mostly up-and-down, water-powered saw mill marks except for some boards that are later replacements with circular saw marks. The third floor probably was constructed as a ca. 1840 addition.

The fourth floor has most of the remaining equipment from the flour operation. This floor may have been a ca. 1860 addition as the framing is uniform throughout the room and the nails are square-headed although the rafters are all mortised-tenoned-and-pegged together. This room's side walls are the first slant of the gambrel roof. Some of the flour mill set-up has iron parts; the wooden parts are extensive. There is a wooden paddle conveyor system (approximately 30' long), a long sifter (also approximately 30'), missing only its canvas sheathing, numerous wooden gears, pin wheels, lever, and rods, all in good condition. Many of the wooden chutes are still in place between the floors. The main gear, a wooden wheel with metal hand and wooden teeth is still at the mill although not in place. The fourth floor also has a dormer window that was inserted in order to hoist grain into the building from the outside.

All the exterior siding is 20th-century material. Some of the interior staircases are replacements. Windows are new 6/6 sash.

The power must have been obtained from the river by an undershot wheel.

CM

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates    Ca. 1800                      Builder/Architect    Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A visually important architectural and historic resource on the eastern edge of the Washington Historic District, Washington Mill in Rappahannock County served as the town mill of Washington from the early national period until the end of the 19th century. While there is no evidence to prove conclusively that the existing structure incorporates elements of a mill erected on this site before 1779, it is certain that the earliest part of the present building was standing by 1800, with subsequent additions in 1840 and 1860. The mill, which retains much of its antebellum machinery in good repair, is significant as a well-preserved artifact of the grain and milling industry that figured largely in the 19th-century economy of Virginia. The structure is believed also to have served as a neutral bartering place between Union and Confederates lines during the Civil War.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The documentation of ownership of this property is very clear. Deeds indicate that the site first was named Redd's Mill and later Rush Mills. Locally, the mill became known by the names of its various owners, almost all of whom were early settlers (or their descendants) of Rappahannock County. The land on which the mill stands once formed part of a Northern Neck grant on the Rush River received by John or Francis Strother in 1748. Acquiring additional holdings through the years, they and other members of the Strother family rose to prominence as merchants, mill owners, and influential citizens of Culpeper County in the period before Rappahannock County was formed from Culpeper in 1833.

In 1777 the Strother heirs sold to Mordecai Redd a tract of 430 acres on the Rush River adjacent to their own land. A mill stood on this site, probably built by Redd between 1777-79, and possibly the original portion of the structure standing today. Two years later Redd sold the tract to George Calvert, Jr., a planter who already held substantial acreage in the area. The increased sale price could indicate that Redd had improved, rather than built, a mill, but there is no further evidence to substantiate this.

The activity of mill operations at this early date in the area is illustrated by a 1778 petition to the House of Delegates "of sundry inhabitants of Culpeper County," who complained that they had been deprived "of formerly large catches of fish in the rivers by several grist mills, hedges, stops and dams that have been built... (and) got it obstructed..." The Commonwealth, which had regulated mills since 1645, required mill owners or proprietors of mills to keep openings and slopes clear. The petitioners therefore prayed that "your honorable House will take their case...and oblige the owners...of the sd. mill dam to make openings..."<sup>1</sup>

In three transactions dated 1787, 1794, and 1800, the Calverts sold the mill and adjacent land to the Garwoods, who may have worked as millers for the Calverts before they became proprietors in their own right. The Garwoods long after they had sold the mill,

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Culpeper County Deed Books.  
Land Tax Books.  
 Personal Property Tax (1811-1831).  
 Northern Neck Grants, G.  
 Rappahannock County Deed Books.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 9 acres

Quadrangle name Washington, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

3	7	7	4	7	5	4	0	4	2	8	8	5	0	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

E 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at a point E of Washington city limits, on N side of U.S. Route 211/522, at intersection of Business Route 211/522 and route 683; thence following said route 683 NE about 1900'; thence extending 100' S to N side of said route 211/522; thence following said route 211/522 almost 2000' SW to access road leading to Business Route 211/52 thence extending 300' NW to point of origin.

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date November 1980

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Judith Hill*  
 Tucker Hill, Executive Director

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date NOV 18 1980

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

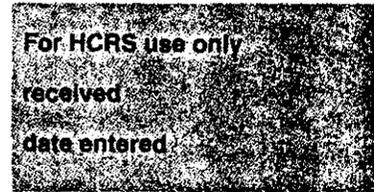
**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Washington Mill, Rappahannock County, Virginia

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7,8

Page 1



7. DESCRIPTION

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property of **Washington Mill** consists of approximately 9 acres. The tract is on the Rush River north of Routes 211 and 522. The nine-acre site is a fraction of the original mill tract of 24 (25) acres.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

are mentioned in deeds dated 1819 and 1822 as having been early occupants of the site. Philip Slaughter bought the mill tract in 1805 from the Garwoods for \$6,000. As the deed recording this exchange specifically mentioned a grist mill and a saw mill, it is certain that the original portion of the existing structure was built before Slaughter's proprietorship, probably as an improvement of the Garwoods.

Slaughter and his wife sold the property to Jeremiah Strother, a descendant of the same family that received the original grant of the property in 1748. Within a year Strother lost it to pay a debt, and it was sold at auction to Samuel Berkeley. Berkeley owned the mill until 1819, when it was purchased by George Calvert, Jr. By this time the acreage of the tract gradually had been reduced and stabilized at twenty-five acres.

William Pendleton bought the property in 1822. Following his death in 1827, the mill remained in Pendleton's estate until 1833 when his widow sold her interest in the mill to Daniel Mason, a merchant and entrepreneur. By 1838 Mason was in deep financial trouble. The mill, now called "Rush Mills," and the tract of twenty-five acres were among his assets auctioned at the Rappahannock Courthouse in 1840. Elijah Cheek, a large landowner and merchant, was the highest bidder at \$3,000.

Cheek probably was responsible for the first of two recorded additions to the earlier structure. In 1840 the Rappahannock land tax books recorded an increase in the property's building's value to \$1,900. The assessment had been \$850, unchanged since 1820, the first year in which such information was included.

A deed in 1846, which cleared the land title, states that the mill was occupied by Garner E. Burgess, who purchased the mill from Cheek four years later. Burgess probably served as resident miller for Pendleton and Mason, before his employment by Cheek, who then moved to Tennessee.

John Jett bought the mill property from Burgess in 1855-57, at which time it became known as Jett's Mill. Jett added \$1,500 worth of improvements in 1860, raising the value of the property to \$3,000. The mill remained in Jett's possession throughout the Civil War and is thought to have served as a neutral trading post for both Northern and Southern partisans.

Similar in plan to most of the water-powered grist mills built in Virginia during the first half of the 19th century, Washington Mill operated for decades as a quasi-public utility, constituting one of the most important services in the rural economy of Rappahannock County.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

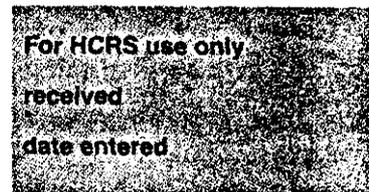
**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Washington Mill, Rappahannock County, Virginia

Continuation sheet #2

Item number 8,9

Page 2,1



8. SIGNIFICANCE

The variety of surviving mechanical apparatus is indicative of the engineering skills required of 19th-century millers such as the Garwoods and Burgess. Among the surviving flour milling equipment on the site are the main gear, a wooden conveyor paddle system, a long wooden sifter, a pin wheel, numerous wooden gears and rods, and a lever.

Following the Civil War the mill continued to operate into the 20th century, although there is no evidence that steam power was ever applied to operate its machinery. The mill provided the setting for a concert by the Virginia Symphony Orchestra in 1950. Mr. Peter Kramer of Washington, Virginia purchased the mill in 1979 and plans to restore it for commercial use.

VDS/RAC

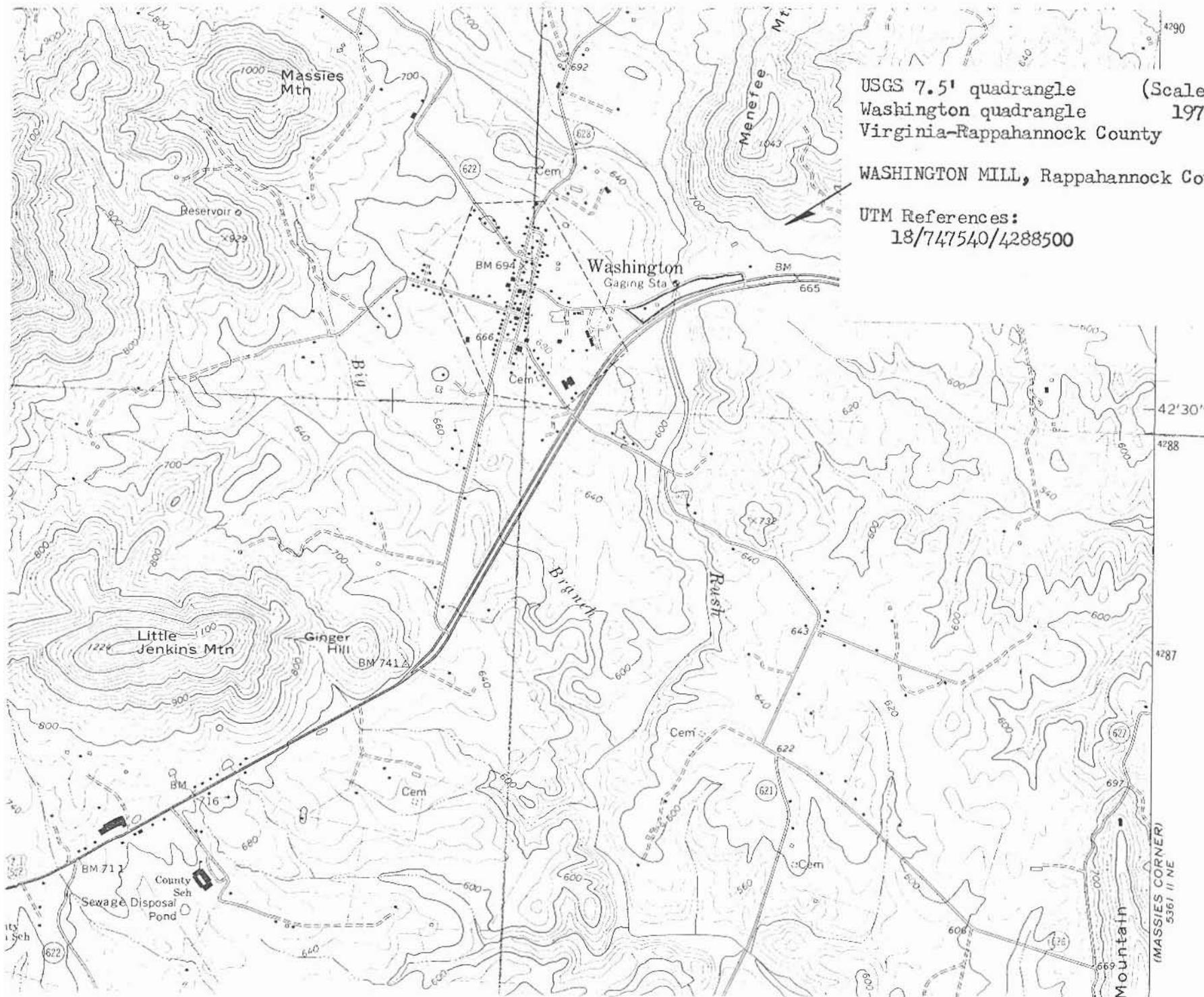
<sup>1</sup>Legislative Petitions, Culpeper County, 1776-1796. Virginia State Library, Richmond.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Rappahannock County Land Tax Books (1833-1863).

Personal Property Tax (1833-1850).

Richmond, Virginia. Virginia State Library. Legislative Petitions. "Culpeper County 1776-1796."



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (Scale 1:24,000)  
Washington quadrangle 1971  
Virginia-Rappahannock County

WASHINGTON MILL, Rappahannock County

UTM References:  
18/747540/4288500

4290

42'30"

4288

4287

(MASSIES CORNER)  
5367 II NE